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FOR RELEASE: 17 January 1974

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FROM: Kika de la Garza

WASHINGTON, D C -- Legislation vitally affecting South Texas farm producers may be expected to come up in this year's session of Congress.

For one thing, it seems likely that income tax and possibly estate tax revision will be on the agenda in the House of Representatives. This is a matter I plan to watch closely, for major changes in income and estate tax laws always carry with them the danger of adverse affects on farmers and ranchers.

Fortunately, many members of Congress understand the serious problems faced by farm and other small business estates. I will work with them in an effort to ensure that people engaged in agriculture are not victimized by any tax law revision.

Early in the session, the House Committee on Agriculture--one of "my" committees--will hold hearings on a bill to revamp the Commodity Exchange Act. This law, in effect for more than 50 years, empowers the U.S. Department of Agriculture to regulate certain markets trading in agricultural commodity futures. The proposed bill would establish a five-member Commodity Futures Trading Commission, with the Secretary of Agriculture as chairman. The House bill, unlike the Senate measure on the same subject, would retain the Agriculture Committee's authority over the Commission. I think that's important.

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FISHING INDUSTRY -- Near the end of last year's session, the House passed a concurrent resolution reported by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries committee, of which I am a member, declaring it the policy of Congress to support, protect and enhance the offshore fisheries resources of the U.S.

In this connection we might learn a lesson from our neighbor south of the border. The Mexican Government has set up an integrated fishery program, which provides for the building of many new fishing boats, establishing a nationwide system of distribution centers for frozen, fresh and canned fish products, making extensive port improvements, and training students as crewmen, motormen, captains, and technicians for processing plants.

We need such a program here. It could prove of great benefit to our area's fishing industry, and I hope to have some hearings on this matter and hopefully some implementing legislation.

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TO SAVE GASOLINE--The General Services Administration, which has the responsibility for operating more than 60,000 Government vehicles, says guarding against the waste of gasoline is often a matter of simply knowing how. GSA naturally has studied ways to conserve motor fuel. It has found that certain driving techniques, maintenance procedures, and car-use practices help stretch gasoline mileage.

The agency's suggestions are set forth in a new leaflet, "Tips for Conserving Gasoline." I have available some copies of this publication and will be glad to send one to any resident of the 15th Congressional District on request.

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DARKNESS AT NOON--The situation wasn't quite that bad as winter-time daylight saving came to Washington, but it was bad enough.

We ran the clocks ahead an hour, as a result of congressional action which I opposed, we found ourselves getting up in Stygian darkness and turning on lights all over the place--which doesn't exactly save energy. Children went off to school in the black of night. The sun didn't come up until about 8:30 DST, by which time a large proportion of the Washington metropolitan area's population had to be at work. And of course it took longer for the commuters--one to a car, mostly--to get to work because they had to drive in the dark. No energy saving here.

Farm people have long known the disadvantages of this artificial time. City folks are learning about them too.

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ANOTHER ENERGY SOURCE--Under the sponsorship of the Department of Agriculture, a study is being made of two current environmental problems: need for more energy and the return of used resources back to the environment in usable form. The study encompasses a complete disposal-recycle scheme for agricultural solid wastes.

Animal manure and farm crop clippings will be decomposed in air-tight tanks, in varying mixtures, to determine the best mix for decomposition and methane gas production. Resulting gas could be used instead of natural gas or gasoline, the researchers say, and sludge produced could be used for fertilizer. Scientists expect the study to show whether small farmers might practically use the process or recycle used resources or augment conventional energy resources.

Who said American ingenuity is a thing of the past?

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POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING--A very young relative of mine was saying his evening prayers and his mother reminded him to ask Jesus to make him a good little boy--to which he replied, "He already did."

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